

CLAIMS

1. A travel product reservation system incorporating a central computer reservation system (CRS) for processing user requests, comprising means for calculating, by accessing a fare database (TDB), and returning selling price information relating to travel products, the said reservation system being accessible from at least one user station, characterised in that it comprises:
 - 5 - a database (FFdB) containing rules for determining the association with a fare family for each travel fare,
 - 10 - a search engine for products that meet the input criteria of a user request and associated selling prices, the search engine comprising:
 - means of communication with the fare family database (FFdB) for gaining access to the rules of determination,
 - means for applying the rules of determination to the travel products
 - 15 found for determining their fare family,
 - means for sorting the travel products found into fare familiesso that a reply is returned to the user station, to produce a display, containing data relating to the travel products that meet the input criteria, sorting them into fare families.
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2. The system according to Claim 1, comprising:
 - a travel solution search engine (MF) communicating with a travel segment database (FDB) for determining travel solutions that meet the input criteria,
 - means of communication between the travel product search engine (MR) and
 - 25 a travel solution search engine (MF), configured to transmit requests from the travel product search engine (MR) and return the travel solution data from the travel solution search engine (MF),
 - a fare fixing engine (MT) communicating with the fare database (TDB) for determining the selling prices of the travel solutions found,
 - 30 - means of communication between the travel product search engine (MR) and the fare fixing engine (MT), configured for transmitting fare requests from the travel product search engine (MR) and returning, from the fare fixing engine, the

selling price associated with each travel solution found to form the travel products.

3. The system according to Claim 1 or 2, characterised in that the database
5 includes commercial fare family classes combining a group of fare families and a predefined geographic market, for a predetermined number of travel dates.

4. The system according to Claim 3, characterised in that the fare families of each commercial fare family class comprises a hierarchical rank.
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5. The system according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, characterised in that it comprises an interface device connected by a communication network to the user station on the one hand and to the central computer reservation system on the other.
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6. The system according to Claim 5, characterised in that the communication network is a large-scale network.

7. The system according to Claim 6, characterised in that the interface device is
20 a web server interacting with a navigation program residing in the user station to provide a graphic user interface with the user station.

8. A method of processing a request from a user wherein information on selling prices relating to travel products is calculated, by accessing a fare database
25 (TDB), and is returned to the user, comprising the following operations:

- a database of fare families (FFdB) is created containing rules for determining the association with at least one fare family for each travel fare,
- a request for information relating to travel products for at least one travel date is received from a user station,
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- the products meeting the request input criteria and the associated selling prices are sought,

- the rules of determination contained in the fare family database (FFdB) are accessed,
 - the rules of determination are applied to the travel products found to determine their fare family,
- 5 - the travel products found are sorted by fare family,
- a reply containing data relating to the products that meet the input criteria is returned to the user station, for display, by sorting them into fare families.
- 10 9. The method according to Claim 8, wherein, if the request for information includes several dates, the following actions are carried out:
- information relating to the product that meets the input criteria and has the lowest selling price for each travel date is returned to the customer station, for display,
- 15 - one of the products displayed is selected when the user enters the user station,
- a request for detailed information is addressed from the user station,
 - a reply containing information relating to the selected product and other products that meet the input criteria for the same date is returned to the user station, for display, by sorting them into fare families.
- 20 10. The method according to Claim 8 or Claim 9, wherein, for each fare family, only a pre-established number of products that meet the input criteria is displayed, starting with the product having the lowest selling price.
- 25 11. The method according to any one of Claims 8 to 10, wherein the input criteria include the origin (starting point), the journey destination and a non-zero number of departure dates.
- 30 12. The method according to any one of Claims 8 to 11, characterised in that in the database (FFdB) commercial classes of fare families are created combining at least one group of fare families with a predetermined geographic market for a predetermined number of travel dates.

13. The method according to Claim 12, wherein at least one commercial class of fare families is selected and the user's request is only processed for the travel products included in the commercial fare family class or classes selected.

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14. The method according to Claim 13, wherein the selection of the commercial fare family class or classes is made via a user station input.

10 15. The method according to Claim 13, wherein the selection of the commercial fare family class or classes is made by an administrator.

16. The method according to any one of Claims 12 to 15, wherein:

- a hierarchical rank is assigned to each fare family in the database (FFdB) for each commercial fare family class,
- 15 - at the user station information is displayed relating to the products that meet the input criteria in the order of their hierarchical rank.

17. The method according to any one of Claims 8 to 16, wherein the rules of determining the association with a fare family include, for each fare family, a set 20 of attributes that a fare must have to be associated with the said fare family.

18. The method according to any one of Claims 8 to 17, characterised in that the data in the database of fare families (FFdB) are accessed in real time.

25 19. The method according to any one of Claims 8 to 18, characterised in that the travel products are air flights that are included in a domestic or international market.

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